

BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 310

DILLINGHAM, ALASKA 99576

PHONE (907) 842-5257

Tribal Councils
Served by BBNA:

Aleknagik
Chignik Bay
Chignik Lagoon
Chignik Lake
Clarks Point
Dillingham
Egegik
Ekuk
Ekwok
Igiugig
Iliamna
Ivanof Bay
King Salmon
Kokhanok
Koliganek
Levelock
Manokotak
Naknek
New Stuyahok
Newhalen
Nondalton
Pedro Bay
Perryville
Pilot Point
Port Heiden
Portage Creek
South Naknek
Togiak
Twin Hills
Ugashik

October 8, 1997

Cynthia L. Johnson, Director
Cash Management Policy & Planning Division
Financial Management Service
U. S. Department of the Treasury
401 14th Street, N.W. Room 420
Washington, D.C. 20227

Dear Ms. Johnson:

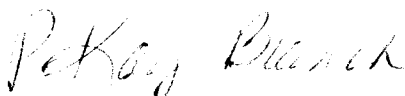
I am writing in regards to the proposed electronic transfer of federal benefit payments to go into effect on January 2, 1999.

I work with elders in rural Alaska. We provide nutrition and supportive services to elders in 30 villages, covering an area of 40,000 square miles. The villages have varying populations (3 - 2,100) and service availability. Only two communities have banks and a few more have ATMs, but these services are very limited. In addition to the lack of banking services, a large percentage of the elders in the region speak only their Native language, either Yup'ik, Denaina or Aleut.

I understand the need for electronic transfer in that it saves money and speeds the process of distribution. However, I urge you to be generous in granting waivers for elders who do not have access to banking facilities, and who live in sparsely populated geographic areas. The language and cultural barriers make it difficult for elders to make changes in a system that seems to be working adequately for them. We continue to locate and assist elders who have been so frustrated by the system that they have given up on the application process and have no monthly income.

Thank you for taking this into consideration.

Sincerely,



P. Kay Branch, M.A.
Elderly Services Manager

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